



ATF Senior Special Agent Scott Teal recently served dinner to customers at Buffalo Wild Wings in Frankfort as part of *Cops Gone Wild*, a Special Olympics fundraiser.

PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

ATF Senior Special Agent  
**Scott Teal**

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**A**lcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Special Agent Scott Teal has found himself in some unique situations in his career efforts to serve others. Beginning his law enforcement service as a sheriff's deputy in Indiana, Teal once spent a week living on a 50-foot-tall billboard sign to raise awareness and money for Special Olympics. In January, Teal traveled roughly 7,000 miles from home serving as a guardian of the Flame of Hope during the Final Leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, running through cities and towns in South Korea. Whether professionally working in the field or serving his community on the soccer field, Teal's commitment to the community is paramount.

**I was looking for an opportunity to be a part of something very special when I joined.** I had the chance to work with some ATF agents as a sheriff's deputy and I always found that they were very intelligent, caring, hard workers. I like the flexibility of the job to be able to work explosives, firearms, narcotics and gangs.

**One gun can change history.** Think about Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, school shootings. I prefer to work violent gun crime cases. I think those cases make the biggest impact on the community and I like the complexity of the cases. They're very challenging.

**First and foremost, I am a senior special agent and I am required to work cases.** I volunteer to participate in other types of opportunities within ATF. I am on the special response team — Team One out of Detroit. They are an incredible group of guys who train very hard in different tactics and weapons and do some very great work.

**I am also the violent crime coordinator** for the Eastern District of Kentucky. I assist state and local agencies with cases involving violent crime. They'll make contact with ATF and we offer assistance, help them with the investigation, provide resources and manpower. Our goal is to get that case into federal court where we can hopefully get an adjudication resulting in the bad guy going to jail longer.

**It would be hard for us to do our job without state and local law enforcement** because of what they bring to the table. Especially in manpower. We often call upon them to assist

*“They really see us as true heroes. And to put a medal around their neck and to just offer a little encouragement, for them it means the world.”*

us with interviews or investigations, setting up a perimeter when we serve a warrant and those types of things. It's critical that we maintain those relationships.

**I became involved with the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run** in Indiana when I was at the sheriff's office back in 1991. I've always been a person who desires to help others. I think that is very important in law enforcement. In fact, I think most police officers are in this type of career because we do enjoy doing for others.

**It was an opportunity to help change lives** and I found that as much as I enjoy doing other types of philanthropy work, what was important to me was the fact that the torch run was indoctrinated by law enforcement. Back in 1981, a police chief started the torch run and he had five officers who ran five miles and raised \$300. That has blossomed into what we have today, where we have more than 142,000 officers raising upwards of \$82 million. So the fact that this started with law enforcement is important to me and it became an integral part of my life and something that has really blessed my family.

**Several years ago when I first started to go to Special Olympic events, there was a swimming competition** I attended. There were 8-year-old girls competing, and they had gotten up on their blocks and were getting ready to compete when they noticed a girl was missing. Everybody was looking around and holding off on the start when one of the ladies saw the other athlete was in the stands — she wasn't aware they were starting. Not just one of them, but all of the girls got down off their blocks, went to the stands, brought her down and got her on her starting block to swim. When you think about the world we live in — the world of Michael Jordans and Kobe Bryants — where do you see that kind of empowerment?

**It makes me feel grateful for what I have.** I get way more out of it than I put into it. I meet the families and the athletes and they are amazing. They deserve the respect and the support we provide in return. They really see us as true heroes. And to put a medal

around their neck and to just offer a little encouragement, for them it means the world.

**In this job, you tend to lose a lot of faith in humanity.** Sometimes you can become pessimistic. With Special Olympics, this is truly about what matters. Through my job I am able to help a lot of people, but with Special Olympics, you just can't define how much impact there is. It's about a segment of the population we normally don't get to serve.

**The Final Leg is the pinnacle of being able to participate in the Law Enforcement Torch Run** for Special Olympics. There are winter games and summer games just like in the Olympics, and there are locations selected from around the world. The winter games for 2013 was in PyeongChang, Korea. I had always wanted to go, but you have to commit 14 days, and there was the travel and the running involved that we did every day. So I didn't immediately put in for it. But there was one guy who had a health issue come up, so they called me and said, 'Hey, would you be interested?' So after all these years, I went. And it was life changing.

**As I said before, law enforcement truly is about helping people and changing lives.** For these athletes, what it does for them and their families is incredible. Just by raising funds and awareness, we provide opportunities for them to grow as a person. We are showing them that they are equal to us and that is powerful to them. There were 10 athletes who ran with us the entire time, and I thought, 'If they can do this, so can I.' The torch run is universal. There were 95 of us who ran this torch from 27 different countries.

**Our theme is the heart behind the badge.** We have these events and all we have to do is get officers there and they are hooked. Being able to work with these other officers for something so positive leaves a lasting impression. Until you have been around the athletes and you've hung those medals around their necks and gotten hugs do you truly understand the impact. 🇺🇸

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